

Detroit Poems

Detroit Poems

By Doug Tanoury



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



Detroit Poems

Funky Dog Publishing



Detroit, Michigan USA



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Detroit Poems

A poet's hope: to be,
like some valley cheese,
local, but prized elsewhere.

W. H. Auden (1907 - 1973), Collected Poems

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Detroit Poems

Winter Pears

On a wooden swing hanging
From the highest bough
Of his backyard pear tree
We learned to fly at the
Speed of dreams on summer
Afternoons, leaning back
And gripping rusted
Chains and looking far up
Into thick foliage that hid
The dark limbs that held us.

From the tall tree that grew
Small winter pears
I'd fly with him across the
Summers and briefly
Forget for a moment
My parent's marriage,
The family finances,
My sister's sickness.
In quick motion sweeping us
Upward, we learned to fly.

Before I knew of fallen fruit
Or how spring winds
Waste pear blossoms,
I knew him. He flew
Unfettered and without
Cares where dreams
Grew slow like winter pears
On the highest branches
To ripen and fall only
In late summer.

Today, under a pear tree
Drooping with fruit
I dreamt him here.

Detroit Poems

Scott Fountain

There is a renaissance fountain
Of white Italian marble
In a city park. On occasion
I still go there, for it holds
The magic of my childhood.
My grandfather and I would visit it
On summer afternoons.
He would always open
His pocket change holder,
In slow motion and pick
Out a coin for me to toss
In the water with my wish.
In the sounds of the
Streams spraying upward,
In the glint of silver coins through
The water, I think of him.

There is a renaissance fountain
Of white Italian marble,
That my grandfather
And I would visit,
That holds all my old wishes,
The heavy heartfelt ones
That sink swiftly in the turbid
Waters and lie invisible
On colored tile bottom
Grown over with algae.
They remain unseen and
Waiting, as requests from
The devout sometimes await
God's granting. Wishes
Are secular prayers.
I know this, for whenever
I hold a Mercury dime or
Indian-head nickel
I wish he were here.

Detroit Poems

Conversation With Grandma

She is so beautiful
When she talks to her grandma,
Sitting on a corner edge
Of the hospital bed
As she listens intently
To grandma's broken
English, nodding her head
At certain statements
Which causes her hair tied
In a pony tail to wag
Cutely up and down,
Sometimes side to side, and
Sometimes it spirals in circles,
Some of them round,
Some more elliptical.

She is so beautiful
When she talks to her grandma,
Sitting on the bed absorbed
In conversation, with animated hair
Tied back in an expressive tail and
Like a conductor's baton it
Seems to set and moderate
The pace of conversation,
And at that moment I want only
To study all the aspects of
Pony-tail physics,
To steep myself in the
Small details of the science
Of silent motion
That accompanies and punctuates
A conversation with grandma.

Detroit Poems

Finches

The other morning
I saw two finches mating
On a slender ledge
Under my porch awning.

They were small like
Two espresso cups
Stacked two high,
One inside the other.

And I imagine
Their sexual parts
To be as tiny and fine
As Swiss movements.

They will nest
Behind the eaves, and
Soon I will hear chirping
From unexpected places.

Detroit Poems

August

Late on these August nights,
I sit on my front porch
Unable to sleep,
And watch the stars,
But mostly I watch
The wind in the trees.
There is an elm a few doors down
That has branched out
Around the street lamp
So that the leaves glow
Translucent green in the night.
The wind moving branches
And leaves making it look
Like a carved jade sculpture
Come to life.

And I think that this has been
The summer of cut jade,
I have never seen grass so deeply green,
Or trees more ornate in their foliage,
And the sky has never been painted in
Finer shades of skyborn blues.
And I think too,
That this is what Icarus saw
And felt just before . . .
So if my wings fail now,
Let me fall, for I have kissed the sky
As if it were a holy icon
And filled my lungs with the
Pure whiteness of clouds, so
If I fall there will be no splash,
No sound except a sigh lifted
Airborne by the waves.

Detroit Poems

Helen

I sit on top of the hill
At Balduck park and
Think of you,
Trying to remember
The way your hair caught
The light of August sunsets,
How you leaned against
A lamppost and
Lifted a bottle of Ripple
To your lips.
I know your waiting for me
Patiently
And all the old gang too,
Burning sandalwood incense
And playing old rock albums,
Dancing under stroboscopic
Lights with tambourine
And castanets, braless and
Barefoot, your long hair
Flying wild and free.
I know your waiting for me,
Helen,
As I sit on top of the hill
At Balduck park and
Turn sixteen again.

Detroit Poems

Maps

Sister Antonina's map
Of the world worked
Like a large window shade
That pulled down
And went up noisily
In true window shade fashion,
Its roller turning made the sound
Of a morning dove cooing, and
The map's fabric winding up
Were wings flapping.
I remember France was green,
The Brest jutting out toward England
And the North Atlantic.
Italy was faded terra cotta, almost a pink,
Against a deep blue Adriatic.

In fourth grade
At Nativity of Our Lord school,
I sat in the front desk
Where I memorized
The shapes of continents and countries.
When I passed the map
Going to lunch or returning from recess
I would run my hand
Across the Mediterranean
To feel the texture of the fabric
And hear the tum-tum sound
Of my fingers drumming
Against Greece and the Aegean.
Occasionally, on toetips and stretching
I could brush a finger
Along St. Bernard's Pass.

I was always sad to hear
The morning dove calling
And wings flapping
As the world retracted
To reveal arithmetic problems
Or spelling assignments
On the blackboard
Written in Sister Antonina's
Precise penmanship.
For reasons that mystify me still,
I failed the fourth grade,

Detroit Poems

Although I stuck my hands
Into every southern sea,
And I touched Athens,
And I touched Rome,
And something in them
Touched me.

Detroit Poems

A Day In May

I stood in an artist's loft under a skylight
Showered in sunshine along with tropical
Plants and exotic trees in large earthen pots

Artwork on each wall oils and reliefs
Half sculptured half painted and framed in
Each window a sky Monet would paint

Floating over a bleak landscape of
Neglected buildings and weed-grown lots
Where trees of heaven lend a tropical look

Like one of Rousseau's jungle scenes verdant
And resplendent in green that grow to fill
The vacant lots between burned out buildings.

Detroit Poems

St. Joseph's

There is a gothic church
With a tall and slender spire
In the old section of the city,
That seems to float
In lighter than air fashion
Toward heaven as if the
Stones themselves are
Moving toward God.
I have never been inside,
But each time I pass
I say to myself that one
Day I will stop to say
A prayer there. I have
Been promising this prayer
For many years.

There is a gothic church
With a tall and slender spire
That is a baroque concerto
Frozen in stone and mortar.
I must go there one day,
Walk through the center portal
Under the large rose window,
Hearing my footsteps on the
Tiled floor of the nave echoing
From vaulted ceilings,
Enter a pew near the altar
And kneeling, hands folded,
Head bowed, let my prayers
Float like stones.

Detroit Poems

More Finches

On a narrow ledge
Under the front porch
Awning

Families of finches
Have built three
Nests

Sloppy and unkempt
With tangled strands
Blowing

This way and that
Like three women in a
Convertible

Driving on the Interstate
With the top down on a
June afternoon

Detroit Poems

Bronze Horseman

Ever since childhood, I could never
Pass you without giving a look,
An old war hero on a horse, hat
Pulled low over your eyes, saber
Dangling at your side, not a
Typical equestrian frozen in some
Triumphant pose, but looking sleepy
And slow, slouching slightly in the
Saddle, tired like a real man,
Tired of the cars whistling past like
Artillery fire, brakes screeching like
Rebel war cries.

No one stops in the middle of the
Intersection to read your name on
The granite monument; no one knows
What you've done, the sacrifice you've
Made, no one cares; will you sit
Forever, staring down at lesser men,
Their petty squabbles about right of way
And dented fenders?

Will you remain unmoved, transfixed as
The dead you've looked on scattered across
The battlefield? Come on, spur your mount,
Let's see you ride, turn the heads of the
Picnickers with the clapping of brazen hoofs
Slapping the asphalt. Fly across the bridge,
Slapping your horse with your hat,
Speed off this island.

Feel the sun, the wind flowing through your
Hair as you ride, come on, let's hear a real
Yankee "WHOO!" and hear your saber growl as
It's pulled from its sheath; come alive with
Rage like Pushkin's statue of Peter The Great,
Ride, ride like a madman down East Grand
Boulevard, past the rows of Victorian Mansions
With old white-haired men sitting on porches,
Bellowing from your belly: "WHOO! WHOO!"

Down the streets lined with boarded-up factories,
Bars and auto parts stores, stomp some common
Folks, cut some non-combatants down, make that

Detroit Poems

Old saber sing, General, then they'll know your name;
You've got to kill some civilians to be remembered.

Detroit Poems

Latin Hymns

We share a hymnal at Sunday Mass
Shoulders rubbing, heads leaning
Together toward each other

Our eyes meet in *Panis Angelicus*
I touch her bare arm in *Jubilate Domino*
We smile through Latin hymns

And the slow dour notes of the organ
Lighten for a moment with the sound
Of her voice singing soft and fragile

God the almighty lives at
That instant in the sweetness
Of words sung in her whisper

And I am filled with prayers of thanksgiving
For that Eve and this Adam
In the Eden of touch

Detroit Poems

Disembodied

On nights when I'm away from her,
I often think that this is what
It must be like to be dead,
To be separated by physical laws
So far reaching and fundamental
That space and time both conspire
To make touch a memory and
The movement of her body
A phantom that passes only
In my mind.

On nights when I'm away from her,
I often wonder if I have passed away.
It feels as if I am a ghost
With a past I cannot relive
And longings I cannot satisfy now,
Separated by an uncrossable gulf
From her and the sound
Of her slippers soughing
Across the hallway floor.

Detroit Poems

Feeding Ducks

For Matt

We fed ducks
Together
The day before
Yesterday

In the park
By the lake
Remember
There were gulls

Hovering
Above our heads
As we stood
Surrounded

By the sounds
Encircled
By their calls
The day before

Yesterday
In the park
Together
We fed ducks

Detroit Poems

Photograph

For Stacey

We often walk in summer
To where the oak trees grow
And gather still green acorns
Shaken off in a storm.
I fill my pockets.
She fills her purse,
And we take them home
To plant in the front yard.

Your father is a poet,
All the better to love you my dear,
The same man who chides you
To chew with your mouth closed
At the dinner table, and taught you
To skip stones as we walked a beach
Along Lake Michigan
In late summer.

She will grow into a woman
Of deep caring, and will remember
Her purse filled with acorns
On summer afternoons
And our plantings
That never brought an oak,
But were never intended to do
More than teach.

Your father is a poet documenting love,
So years from now when you
Chew your food like a lady,
This poem will be a 35MM glossy print
On high grade paper,
Of father and daughter
On an August afternoon,
Skipping stones at the beach.

Detroit Poems

Six Sonatas

Metaphors for violin, flute, cello and harpsichord

We sat in the balcony at First Methodist
Up where ornate oak trusses span the ceiling,
And as the musicians tune, one at a time,
The sound of their instruments drifts up and
I think I have chosen a seated nearer to God.

A man in tails and four women in black dresses
Play Telemann and as the music starts
I think they should all be wearing white
On the crimson carpet of the altar
Beneath the red glow of sanctuary light.

The arm holding the bow of the
Baroque violin is the white wing
Of a large sea bird moving slow
And graceful as it floats suspended
On currents of unseen air.

A tall woman plays a wooden flute
Her fingers moving like leaves in the wind.
When she plays solo, her pausing a moment
And taking soft breaths is the sound of
Front doors opening on a January morning.

The blonde playing cello seems so fair
Her face and arms marbled white
Under the lights her bare shoulders
Meet the black fabric of her dress
As snow drifts across an asphalt road.

A slight woman plays violoncello.
Her tiny hands and thin fingers
Moving on the strings like the small crabs
That walk sideways at the seashore
With slow and tentative steps.

The man in tails plays harpsichord
It whispers water sounds that rivers make
Flowing around bends, the music
Somewhat muffled, strums like rain
Falling on a metal awning.

Detroit Poems

Blushing Sunrise

As in Homer's Iliad
Dawn is a golden haired girl,
Painting the sky over the far
Eastside

Above wood frame homes
Needing gutters and new roofs
As a boy watches
Alone

At the sunrise window
Of his bedroom as daylight
Creeps above the elms on
Holcomb street.

Detroit Poems

My House And Shadows

A black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in hangs
Framed on my living room wall

It stands alight in winter sun
A series of rectangles topped
With gable triangles of the roof

I stare into darkened windows
Where I once gazed onto photo
Perfect afternoons filled with light

The front porch is a box held up
By two white pillars and my
Grandfather's swing is empty now

It looks as if no one is home but
I alone looking at this landscape
And plain facade of red bricks

Windows some dark and others
White with shades drawn against
The brightness of late afternoon

As the sun sets behind the bar and
Bowling alley across Gratiot Avenue
A lone street lamp casts its silhouette

On Rohns street the shadows are long
Stretched into just before sunset length
In front of and on the house I grew up in

Detroit Poems

Detroit River

Sitting on the
Breakwater
Watching the waves
Studying
Their repeated motion

I miss the
Fisherman
Whitecaps make me
Remember
Him gently now
And days fishing

Endlessly
In a boat
Together
By buoy #3
Watching the waves

Studying
Their repeated motion
Sitting on the
Breakwater

Detroit Poems

My House In Twilight

A black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in hangs
On my living room wall

Above an end table lamp and
On evenings when the only light
Is across the room

The house looks as it did in the
Summer twilight as the sunset
Behind the bowling alley

And I sat on the wide gray steps
Of the front porch watching the
Traffic on Gratiot Avenue

White eaves follow the gables
And angle to heaven balancing
The front porch boxiness

I look at the photo often as I pass
On my way to the kitchen or
Toward my front door

Always looking for some sigh
Of movement as if the elms
In the distance will sway

Or a car turn into traffic perhaps
The wooden storm door swing open
Or a window shade raise

Maybe my grandfather taking
His seat on the front porch swing
Would signal normalcy

And I could know those within
Are well as only a shadow passing
A window would tell me

Or a boy sitting on wide gray steps
In a soft pink sunset light staring
Bored into passing traffic

Detroit Poems

Felix Culpa

I walk through an open-air market
On Saturday mornings in the Spring,
As I did with my grandparents as a boy,
And with my father in years before, but now
I hold her hand as we cut a path through
The crowds past stalls where farmers,
And flower peddlers bark goods and prices
With voices echoing from a cathedral-like
Clerestory and high ceiling.

The market is a long awning with red brick
Entrance arches in the Roman style,
Creating a patchwork of light and shadow.
We steal large purple grapes to feed each other,
And pick strawberries as big as apples from
Cardboard flats and hold them up to each
Other's mouth tempting one sinful bite.
I whisper chewing stolen fruit: "Felix Culpa"
She laughs and pushes another grape in my mouth.

Detroit Poems

My House In Winter

A black and white photograph of the house
I grew up in hangs on my living room wall
Spotlighted by an end table lamp
I look at it often as I pass noting the lights
And darks the whites and blacks the
Lines and shapes that make the facade
The absence of all people seems somehow
Fitting in a picture populated by shadows
In a landscape of captured stillness
The house alone stands the singular subject
Of this work in the sunshine of a clear
Winter afternoon filling the photo

Wide gray wooden steps where I would
Sit on summer days waiting always
Waiting for adulthood and my own life
Watching and listening to the traffic
Idling on Gratiot Avenue in rush hour
Lines slowly edging uptown
If the picture had been taken in summer
Four O'clock blooms would still be closed
But the Rose of Sharon would be open
The grass would be tall and need cutting
And the vines crawling up the garage

Would cloak the red brick in grapeleaves
But it is winter in the photograph and
The elms on Holcomb street stand
Without leaves and there are no flowers
Or people and the only color is on the
Gray steps where I would sit in summer
Picking blossoms in late afternoon
Shadows waiting to be grown so that
Childhood would be a landscape to only
Look back on in the starkness of winter
Where no one is seen and nothing grows

Detroit Poems

Folded Tent

A Mosaic

I remember my bedroom window always open
on summer days, carrying the crackling music from
my RCA Victrola out into the alley and beyond,
blaring at full volume for hours until I grew
tired of cranking it, leaning out my window
after sunset to shoot rats, clutching a BB pistol
with both hands, holding my breathe, cutting them
in the sights, gently squeezing the trigger and watching
them scramble off wounded to die in the twilight.

My bedroom window always open on summer nights,
the tarnished light from a nearby street lamp
shining dimly into my room, falling asleep to the
occasional sound of footsteps crunching down the alley
on chips of glass, and the constant roar of traffic
speeding down Gratiot Avenue.

I remember my room, tapping out my first misspelled
words on a Remington Noiseless, reading science fiction
and dreaming of Mary Ellen from my seventh grade class,
my thoughts of her always steaming in sin, on a
thousand strange and exotic worlds, in the cold black
emptiness of space, Mary Ellen was at my side, writing
her name: MARY ELLEN, MY STAR GIRL, surrounded by
arrow pierced planets on the wall behind the door
where it couldn't be seen, and being scared at night,
not daring to get up for a glass of water, pulling the
covers over my head and listening to the strange noises
the house made in the middle of the night.

I remember the science fiction paperbacks stacked
on the dresser and hard pornography piled underneath
my bed, squeezing pimples in the dresser mirror,
winking at my own reflection every time I passed it,
reading Dostoevsky and dreaming of highschool
cheerleaders, locking myself in to smoke cigarettes
and drink red Italian wine.

Detroit Poems

I remember the altar in the corner of the dining room, crowded with statues: St. Anne, St. Joseph, St. Francis and Anthony, the Sacred Heart and Blessed Mother standing among the yellowing palms from the last Palm Sunday and the flower picked from the garden, the Infant of Prague standing in the center of the altar surround by the smaller statues and flowers, wearing new robes every month, robes of purple and red velvet, satin, silk, and gold lace. I was always envious, for he was the best-dressed member of the household.

I remember portraits of Arabs in colorful robes, long muskets slung over their shoulders, and side arms in drooping holsters at their hips, sitting in carved wooden frames in the attic, pictures that were dusty dreams from distant times and far off places, far from the grime and noise of a city slum.

I look across the empty field that holds my past, and watch the tall grass swaying in the wind. I walk through the alley, looking up into the empty air, to the place where my bedroom window should be, imagining I hear the old Victrola crackling out a song by Dinah Shore, the music drifting down to me standing in the alley, but all I hear is the roar of rush hour traffic speeding down Gratiot Avenue.

Detroit Poems

Run Softly

I run through the woods
On a path along the river,
Under the December sky
That moves from dark gray
To gathering deep purple,
Where trees and snow
Turn the landscape into
A charcoal and chalk sketch.

I remember the Frost I learned
As a boy, and mark his meter
With my footfalls as I run:
“Whose---woods---are---these---
I---think---I---know---”
Made by the sandpaper sound
Of my sneakers on the asphalt
With a dusting of snow.

Detroit Poems

Time Piece

Yes, I often stand on the front porch
Of an old Victorian house that long
Ago coughed its last breath in a rising
Cloud of pale red dust, to the choking
Noise of walls collapsing, plaster
Ripping, timbers cracking, wrecking ball
Swinging like a black pendulum, as
Heaving groans fade into the dull
Clunk-clickity of brick on brick, and
The tick-tock sounds of settling debris.

Yes, I often stand there, hand tugging
On the handle, fist pounding on the
Battered wooden door that frames a
Tattered screen, listening for the
Rattle of her rosary and the yak-yak
Of telltale floorboards, as I watch
Her silhouette moving through the
Darkened rooms, a shadow never stepping
Near the light, never moving toward
The door.

I often stand there refusing to leave,
Knowing that time is as irreversible
As death, yet defying both, ignoring
The down-in-the-ground-grown-over-with
Grass finality of rigamortized facts,
Knowing in the end I'll win, one day
I'll sprint up the steps, taking two
At a time, the way I used to, and
The door will swing open, she'll
Come out, and we'll sit in the sun
On the front porch steps

Forever.

Detroit Poems

My House Once Again

There is a black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in hanging on
My living room wall above a table lamp

I look at it often drinking my morning coffee
My eyes draw to every window and a gray
Sky wedged between the gables of the roof

The red brick siding is accented by drawn white
Window shades framed like stretched canvas
Awaiting a painter's brush and knife

I am moved always by the humbleness of
The paint peeling from the eaves and the stark
Facade highlighted by front porch and awning

The wide steps that lead up to the weathered
Wooden storm door recessed in the awning
Shadows and I know I took the photo as a boy

From across the street so I could remember
In years away and be able to look back always
And not forget what it was and what is was not

What I am and what I am not what they were
And what they were not where I am and where
They have gone and of journeys ended and begun

Detroit Poems

My House Repeated

There is a photograph of the house
I grew up in hanging on the wall in
My living room that I took as a child

I took it so as to not forget what it
Looked like and so that when grown
I could look back and know

The future is now and I look at it often
And remember the red brick and white
Wood of the facade and look in the door

And gaze into the windows some dark
Others white shades drawn blinds closed
Everyone is inside on a winter afternoon

But me who has gone across the street
And fit the entire house into my lens
From basement windows to the chimney

As gables poke into a black and white
Sky and elms on Holcomb street look
Pencil sketched onto a white paper

I return to the house often in my dreams
Where it is dark and dangerous and no
Light enters inside and no one is ever home

Awake and asleep the house is a place I love
And hate the rooms and furniture always
The inescapable and grayscale part of me

Detroit Poems

The Good-bye Dawn

She awoke to a beautiful morning,
She was old and an expert on such things
Having seen her share,
The kind of morning that rattles the years
Like prayer beads,
The kind that shakes the branches of the mind
Loosening memories of Lebanese mountains
Pounding a Mediterranean sky.

It was a toast, eggs and bacon morning,
A sun soaked September morning,
The kind that stays with you,
Snoozing through the afternoon and
Snoring through the evening.

What a morning to leave
Eggs and bacon cold on
The kitchen table, to walk out into
The sun soaked streets
Without opening the door
Without saying good-bye.

So, good-bye to you,
To you who grew like
A cedar among the pines,
To you who's words glistened like
A lotus pond of oriental poems,
To you who made fantasy flower
And belief bloom,
To you who slept the nights
With rosaries and creaking bones,
All poems lead to you.

Detroit Poems

A Black And White Photograph

There is a black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in hanging on
The wall

Of my living room lit by a lamp on
The end table that shines a summer light
That seems

To glisten on the windows that I
So desperately search for face or figure
But finding

Them all dark and the front porch
Swing empty my eyes rise to
Gables adding

Geometry to a sky in a time there
Was no order only the willy nilly
Reaching and

Retraction of feelings as distant as the
Elms on Holcomb Street faint in the
Photo's background

Detroit Poems

My House Revisited

The house I grew up in is centered
In a black and white
Photograph on my living room wall

It moves me each time my gaze passes
over it like an
Impressionist landscape Pissarro would paint

The light and shadow patterned across
The image tells
A time in late afternoon the weather clear

My father's two-tone Chevy is in the street
And my uncle's
White Buick is in the alley yet no one is seen

And I would think no one is home except for
The front door is open
A wooden storm door alone holds out winter

The house stands stark like a Doric column
Unadorned yet monumental
It's facade simple and cut by many windows

Sometimes it seems lifelike to me as if the
Wooden storm door
Could swing open at camera shutter speed

Or my father's red and white Chevy could
Pull from the curb
And drive off into traffic on Gratiot Avenue

It is the magic of place and the power of
Persons that holds
My eyes searching for movement in stillness

Scanning the horizon hazed in distance
For the bending
And swaying of the elms in the winds

Detroit Poems

My House Demolished

The house I grew up in is gone
Demolished and the cast iron
Radiators in each room sold as scrap

My hand recalls the feel of the banister
My ear the squawk of each step
My eye the hues of sunlit stained glass

The oak doors and windows
Sold as architectural antiques
The red bricks sold by weight

My grandfather napping in his armchair
My grandmother working in the kitchen
Me staring at the plain white ceiling

Quiet neglect and abandonment
Replaced by bursting diesel of a
Bulldozer and whacks of wrecking balls

The smell of my grandfather's chair
And my grandmother's cooking and
My uncle's dog barking in the yard

Brick timber glass and plaster debris
Strewn and piled across the lot where
A plum tree still stands as sole survivor

My Grandfather's coughs my grandmother's
Quiet laughter and through an open
Window the smell of lilacs in early June

Stained glass hues range over storefronts
Across the street as sunset forms a study
In blue on the west side of Gratiot Avenue

Detroit Poems

My House Again

There is a black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in
Hanging on my living room wall

The wide gray steps that lead up
To the white-railed porch
And weathered wooden storm door

I look at it often always hoping to find
Someone on the front porch
Swing or standing in the doorway

I have rendered that facade again
And once again like an
Impressionist haystack in a landscape

Repeating itself only in different color
And in different light
Reoccurring dream like it replays itself

Until the message is understood or
Fully explored obsessions
Are messenger angels sent from God

I see going up the first concrete step
Before the gray ones
Is also the last step going down

Has on going up a crack on the right and
On the left coming down
That I saw always coming and going

And I see now in my rendering and
Rerendering as I am touched
Again and once again in my going up

And in my coming down and in my
Dreams and in my art and
In my waking and in my sleeping

In my loving and in my hating those
Same gray steps that are
The start of my journey and the end

Detroit Poems

My House And Lines

There is a black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in hanging matted
In a frame in my living room above a lamp

The gabled geometry of the roof and the
Sharp angles of the facade are classical
Like a Greek temple of white marble

The wooden pillars holding up the
Front porch awning look like Ionic
Columns in a landscape of straight lines

Horizontals and verticals blend on a
Winter afternoon without color and elms
On Holcomb street stand without leaves

Light and shadow paint the shade drawn
Windows and plain red brick to prospective
And depth giving illusion to the past

Solitary and monolithic it is as close as
I can get to the child who has turned
Boredom and lens on this scene years back

I see my eyes in the windows and
My shape at the door up the wide
Temple steps between white columns

Detroit Poems

Lake St. Clair

The sun hangs
Tangerine
Over a blue
Silhouette
Of gathering clouds
As lake freighters
Navigate
The narrow channel
Signaling
With steam whistles
Their orange hulls
Teetering
On a fuzzy
Horizon
Where color blends
Over the blue
Silhouette
Of gathering clouds
The sun hangs
Tangerine

Detroit Poems

Promise

For Mary

The priest read the gospel and we stood
Together in the pew listening to the
Story of the widow who married seven brothers
And the riddle put to Jesus:

"In the resurrection, Master, whose wife
will she be?"

And Jesus answered "No one's wife."
For in the afterlife you become
Like angels. And I thought
"Pure Spirit" as I touched her
Standing next to me,
"Without body or gender,
Consciousness without sex"

We looked at each other,
Still standing,
She smiled and I smiled back,
No longer hearing the priest read,
I leaned to whisper,
Smelling her hair
As I moved my lips
Toward her ear:

"In the resurrection, I'll be
Your husband still . . .
I promise."

Detroit Poems

My House

There is a black and white photograph
Of the house I grew up in
Hanging on my living room wall

It is not known who took the picture
But I think I did it standing behind
The fire hydrant across the street

The Rose of Sharon bushes are bare of
Leaves and blossoms and winter elms
On Holcomb street spiderweb the sky

A shadow from a street lamp is cast
In the street says it is late on a
Winter afternoon and it's a weekend

For my father's red and white Chevy is
Parked in the street and my uncle's
Buick convertible is parked in the alley

The blinds in the windows are closed
Against the sunlight and my grandfather's
Front porch swing is oddly empty

Everyone is gone and the house stands
Dream like in afternoon light with faded
And peeling paint captured in a picture

Detroit Poems

The House on Rohns

I return to the house on Rohns
In my dreams and find that it
Surrounds a garden courtyard that was
Never there in waking but that somehow
In my dream memories always was

Looking southward on bright sunlight
Shining on grass long and lush I stand
At a window that was never there
But exists only in the temporal soupiness
Of a dreamer's homecoming

She stands with me looking at it
And on waking I tell her so
She pulls the door to enter
But only I know the idiosyncratic
Push and pull movements that open dream doors

And I lead holding her hand
Into the sunlight bright on us and the
Grass that whispers somewhere between
Knee and ankle as we walk surrounded by the
Weathered red brickwork of a dream

Detroit Poems

About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing <http://www.funkydoggpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

This and other ebook collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be read and downloaded at: <http://home.comcast.net/~dtanoury1/Tanoury.html>

Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area. Detroit personal landmarks often serve as the subject matter for his poetry. The city becomes both the setting and subject for most of Doug's work.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, *Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse*, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c) 1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.